

jo FRANCO-GERMAN RELATIONS 1871-
1914

is not in our interests to prevent it. If they break the Algeciras Act we can first leave it to the other Powers, above all Spain, to protest." If the public demanded the despatch of warships the Chancellor was to damp down the cry. These phrases might have been used by Bismarck. The ruler's influence in the shaping of foreign policy, however, was at all times limited, and on this occasion events moved so quickly that his cautious counsels fell on deaf ears. At the end of April Jules Cambon told Kiderlen that bad news had arrived from Fez, and that France must take measures to rescue French and other European residents. This was no breach of the Algeciras Act, he argued. There was no intention of occupying the capital or infringing the sovereignty of the Sultan. Kiderlen rejoined that he had full confidence in the sincerity of the French Government, but events sometimes produced unintended results. If French troops remained in Fez, so that the Sultan only ruled with the aid of French bayonets, Germany would regard the Act as finished and would resume complete liberty of action. He followed up his warning to France with a memorandum which secured the Kaiser's assent*
* The occupation of Fez would prepare the way for the swallowing of Morocco by France. We should obtain nothing by protests, and should suffer a moral defeat which it would be hard to bear. . . . If they establish themselves in Fez out of anxiety for their nationals, we too have a right to defend our own. We have large German firms in Mogador and Agadir. German ships could go to these ports for the protection of these firms." Here was the new course—to take pledges and await a French offer. The German press began to peg out counter-claims, and even the *Ber/wer Tageblatt* clamoured for

a port at Agadir. On May 1 the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* announced that a violation of the Act of Algeciras, voluntary or otherwise, would restore to all its signatories their liberty of action.

Despite these reiterated warnings a French force entered Fez on May 21 and rescued the Sultan from danger. The German view that a new situation had been created was shared by Spain, who proceeded to occupy the northern zone assigned to her by the secret treaty of 1904. Cruppi vainly attempted to reopen the railway negotiations at Berlin, and on June 11 Jules Cambon administered some soothing syrup. France, he declared, had no desire to infringe the Algeciras Act, and she intended to recall her troops from the capital as